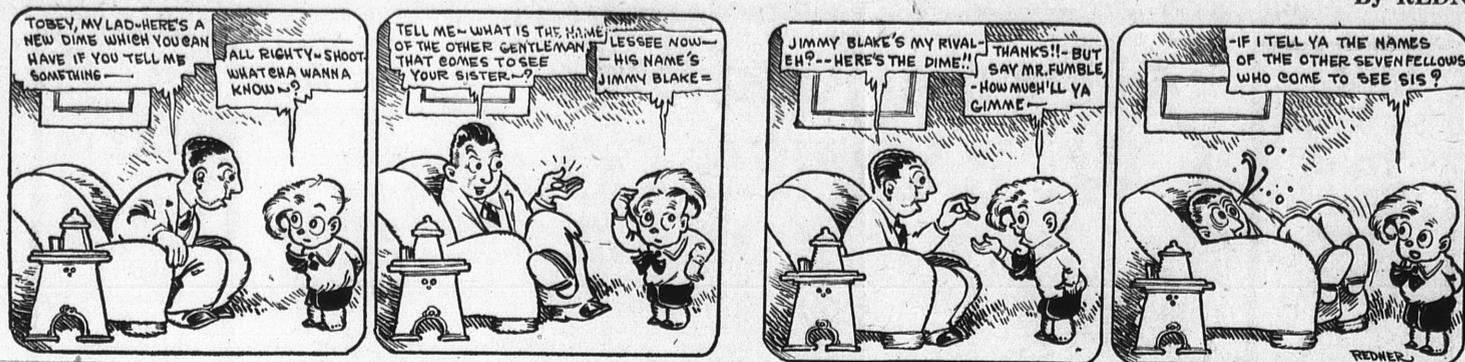


TOBEY AND TYKE



Mr. and Mrs. Ed Chambers and daughter Betty Jean were entertained at the home of their aunt Mrs. Chester Turner Hoag, of Hollywood.

Mr. and Mrs. George Greaves' home on Andree avenue were Mr. and Mrs. Ross Van Voorhies and family, of Huntington Park.

Dinner guests by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lynch of the Castle Apartments were Mrs. Mary G. Seely and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dawson, of Los Angeles.

Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Thompson of Andree avenue were guests of Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Thompson of Hermosa Beach. Other guests were Lieut. and Mrs. Edward A. Thompson of San Diego.

A family reunion was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. George A. Woodward Sr., Arlington avenue.

The SKELETON FINGER



BEGIN HERE TODAY

NORMAN SLATER, in love with Kathleen Glenister, searches for her on a motorcycle, after she has been tricked to visit a lonely spot by—

SIR DUDLEY, who wishes to marry her to allay suspicion that he is the murderer of her brother, George Glenister. Slater is made prisoner by Sir Dudley's agent, when—

JAMES WRAGGE, detective, assigned to the case, begins a search for the two young lovers.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XX  
The Whispering Gallery

INSPECTOR WRAGGE followed the old butler through the green baize door on the tip-toe of expectancy. Here at last was the man who for years had lived at the very heart of the happenings which led up to the Beechwood mystery and who seemed to want to tell him things. The pantry proved to be a cozy and secluded den, far removed from the clutter of the kitchen and evidently a sanctum into which minor details of the household would not dare intrude.

Hinkley produced a bottle of port and with trembling fingers filled two glasses.

"I'm all shaken up, sir," he said. "I heard you tell the master that Miss Kathleen and Captain Slater have eloped—but it can't be true. There was no need for them to run away together. Both of age, and Lady Marriages set on the match. There's something behind it all."

Wragge felt that it would be good policy to give confidence for confidence. "I agree with you," he said. "I don't mind telling you that for the moment I am more concerned with Miss Kathleen Glenister's safety than with tracing her brother's murderer. What exactly do you apprehend has befallen her, Mr. Hinkley?"

"God knows!" was the reply. "I don't trust the master since our young lady turned against him over that ghastly finger, sweet as he used to be on her. He was away all day yesterday till late at night, and he went out again after breakfast this morning. He had only just come in when you called."

"See here, Mr. Hinkley, all this is very serious," the inspector said in his most seductive tone. "And the gravity has been increased by the arrival of the lady you admitted as I was leaving the library. I have reason to believe that she is culpably implicated in the case."

"No error there, sir," the butler rejoined with quavering heartiness. "Mrs. Coningsby wants to be Lady Glenister—you can lay that to rest. It would suit her to rights for the girl the master hankered after to meet with four play."

"You are a colleague to be proud of," Wragge pursued his advantage. "You won't raise any objection if I creep back into the entrance hall and use my ears at the library door?"

The butler's face lit up with senile glee. "I can do you better than that," he said. "I'll take you up to the whispering gallery. You can hear every word spoken in the library and see what you admit through the Judas-hole. The place was fixed up by the monks hundreds of years ago when this house was a priory. I never told Sir Dudley about it."

Wragge finished his wine and stood up. "Take me there at once," he said.

"If we meet any of the maids you are a plumber, sir," rejoined Hinkley.

But they met no maids as with all due caution they mounted a back staircase, traversed several corridors and so came to a spare bedroom on the front landing. Here the butler did something to the carved mantelpiece and Wragge found himself passing through a suddenly opened aperture in the wall to a narrow space that smelt of all the ages.

"There is the Judas-hole," said Hinkley, pointing to a pin-prick of light in the darkness of the secret room. "I will wait in the bedroom, but I must shut you in if you won't hear anything. Tap when you want to come out."

The panel slid back into place and Wragge at once heard voices in heated altercation.

"I don't believe you," the woman was saying. "You've got the girl somewhere and you are trying to force her to marry you. I want you here and now, Dudley, that I won't stand it. You have got to marry me or take the consequences."

Wragge's eye was glued to the Judas-hole by now. The scene below in the library was as clear as

if viewed from a stage box, yet he was peering through a perforation in the wall so small that it might have been the puncture of a needle.

"The consequences?" sneered the master of Beechwood. "What consequences can you threaten me with, my dear Ivy?"

She raised one of her clenched fists. "I will denounce you to Scotland Yard," she replied in low, tense tones. "I will repeat to the police the revelations of my brother's diary, showing how you faked the details of George Glenister's death. Simon Trickey shall come back from the grave to accuse you."

Sir Dudley's laugh rang out unafraid. "If Simon is dug up he will make it a good deal hotter for you than for me," he retorted. "You

are hardly in a position to throw stones from your own little glass house, Ivy. Your disclosure to me about that dose of poison would interest Scotland Yard far more than your unconfirmed recollection of Simon's diary."

For a moment the woman seemed to be nonplussed by the baronet's counterstroke.

"I don't care," she broke out again. "I'd go to the gallows gladly, if you were to hang too. And Simon's diary will work that all right."

"But you haven't got Simon's diary—at least so you say," Sir Dudley returned. "Look here, Ivy, why can't we run this on business lines? We are both tarred with the same brush, and the tar is thicker on you than on me. Let's call it a deal. I don't believe you were fool enough to burn Simon's record, which would be your only real hold on me. I will give you ten thousand pounds for it."

"You brute—to suppose I want your money!" her anger rang out. "You have got to accept my terms or I give you away."

Sir Dudley shrugged and, walking to the table, poured himself a stiff drink.

"If that is your ultimatum, here's mine," he said calmly. "As soon as you start giving me away I shall lay an information against you for doing Simon in."

Wragge's complacent thought that the information was as good as laid already was interrupted by a movement flashed on his vision from a quarter apart from the principal actors in the scene below. It took place outside one of the French windows of the library, and as it focused through the monkish spy-hole on the retina of the detective's eye it gave him the surprise of his life. The whole pile of evidence built up during the last ten minutes fell with a crash.

For standing outside the window, his fishy eyes staring through the plate glass into the library, was Mr. Simon Trickey. He didn't look as if he had been buried very deep, but there was no doubt that he was very much alive, and deeply interested in the couple in the library.

Wragge concentrated all his attention on the immediate developments. Did the reprobate intend to reveal his presence, and if not what were the chances that he would be able to retreat without being seen? Mrs. Coningsby had her back to the window and unless she turned round the apparition there would remain unnoticed by her so long as it preserved silence. But Sir Dudley had only to raise his eyes from the woman confront-

ing him and he could hardly fail to perceive the malign countenance of his former clerk.

This was exactly what happened. In setting down his empty glass the baronet had to turn slightly to the window, and the detective, watching him like a cat, saw by the gleam of surprised horror that he had recognized Trickey. Wragge could scarcely contain himself. Would Sir Dudley rush forward, fling open the window and demand explanations from the dissolute blackmailer who had so mysteriously risen from the dead, or would he conceal his discovery from the woman who had somehow failed to administer a fatal dose to the man outside?

Five seconds later, by the masterly manner in which he adopted the latter course Sir Dudley had earned a grudging meed of admiration from the detective. With perfect composure he addressed the lady in the only way possible if he was not to loosen his hold on her by revealing her failure.

"Well," he said, "are you going to face the music, Ivy?"

Without waiting to hear more Wragge hurried to the panel, tapped, and it was immediately opened by Hinkley.

"The shortest way down to the garden, Mr. Hinkley," he begged. "There is no moment to spare."

The butler gave some brief directions, and a minute later Wragge emerged from the gun-room door by which Norman and Kathleen had left the mansion on a certain memorable night. A few steps brought him round the angle of the house and he was in view of his quarry. Mr. Simon Trickey was still hovering near the library window, having only withdrawn far enough to be invisible from the interior.

(To Be Continued)

NORMAN ARMS APARTMENTS

The residents of the Arms were keenly appreciative of the beautiful carols that awakened them Christmas morning.

Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Wright were holiday dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Schacht of Long Beach.

Mr. and Mrs. John Canterbury spent the holidays with Mrs. Canterbury's parents at Alhambra.

Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Bradbury were Christmas dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Middleton of Fullerton.

Mr. and Mrs. Emmett Matthews were entertained over the holidays by friends in Hollywood.

The next regular meeting of the Royal Neighbors will be held in the Women's Club hall Friday evening, Jan. 8, at 7:30. At the meeting following, Jan. 15, the newly elected officers will be seated.

By REDNER

Miss Lucile Howe of Hollywood was a guest during the holidays at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Howe, of Anapola avenue.

Ed Peché of Reddy, Calif., spent the holiday and weekend with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Black of Vista Highlands.

Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Bradford and family, of Amelia street, were entertained Saturday by Mr. and Mrs. William Shanteau of Chateau Thierry.

Mr. and Mrs. Will Reeve of Gramercy avenue were weekend visitors in San Diego.

Mr. and Mrs. L. Hanle of Detroit, Mich., were recent guests of their cousin, Mrs. Gramling, of Cota avenue.

A jolly party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Hogerson of Hollywood included Mr. and Mrs. J. V. Murray and family, Mrs. Mary Jessome, Miss Mary Jessome, Joseph Madore, and Anthony Jessome.

John W. ("Dad") Fleisher of 1739 Andree avenue enjoyed his seventy-fifth Christmas dinner at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hall of Gardena. "Dad" says that "good Frenchmen may be allowed to go to Paris after passing away, but all good Americans will be satisfied to spend a good part of the hereafter in Torrance and Gardena."

TORRANCE NOTES

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lynch of the Castle Apartments were dinner guests Sunday of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Murray of 1618 Arlington avenue.

Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Brady of Los Angeles entertained Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Bradford and family at dinner Sunday.

RINGER



Miss Mary Hendrik Gilles, New York's only woman bell ringer, has been ringing the bell in Grace church for 17 years.

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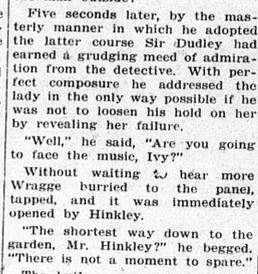
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